



For Immediate Release

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WANTED

LOCAL RESIDENTS WILLING TO HELP IN A HEALTH EMERGENCY

*Tristate Medical Reserve Corps recruiting volunteers with medical, non-medical backgrounds;
May introductory meeting will highlight conditions in which volunteers may serve*

HAMILTON COUNTY (04/05/06) – When disaster strikes, many of us feel an urgent need to help, as was demonstrated in the weeks following Hurricane Katrina. Area residents interested in donating their time and expertise to respond to emergencies in their community can join the Tristate Medical Reserve Corps (TMRC). An introductory meeting will be held 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., May 6, at the Xavier University Cintas Center, to tell citizens what roles they can play in response to a variety of emergencies – man-made, natural disasters and disease epidemics.

“We know that many people with medical and non-medical backgrounds from the Greater Cincinnati Tristate Community will step forward to help during an emergency,” said Jerry Lautz, Southwest Ohio Regional Medical Response System coordinator and principal architect of the TMRC. “This program is an effort to identify anyone who may be willing to help, teach them what they need to know before we need them, and develop a system of notification and response,” said Lautz.

What commitment is involved?

The TMRC is a branch of the federal government’s Medical Reserve Corps and its goal is to provide a volunteer pool for the region that can enhance and support first responders, public health agencies and the healthcare infrastructure during a crisis. TMRC volunteers can choose to serve at a variety of levels – in their own community, the Tristate region, or for communities in need nationwide. Volunteers will also be able to decide how much or how little training they would like to receive. Only the initial two-hour training is required; additional trainings will be offered, but are optional.

Why is my help needed?

“It is unrealistic to think the federal or state government will have the resources or staff to immediately come to our rescue if a disaster strikes our region,” said Mike Ottaway, public health coordinator for the Southwest Ohio public health region. “We will need a ready and willing group of citizens to help maintain the area’s essential services and provide support to our emergency responders. Regardless of your background or level of training, becoming a member of the TMRC helps ensure that the region will be able to sustain itself following a disaster,” said Ottaway.

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The Tristate approach to the Medical Reserve Corps program is the only one of its kind in the country. This regional approach to emergency response helps ensure a broad base of volunteers from a variety of backgrounds who may be better equipped to help during an emergency because their community was not as severely impacted as a community in another part of the region.

During the May 6 training, a portion of the region's 210-bed mobile field hospital, called an Alternative Care Center, will be on display. Among other uses, the Alternative Care Center can provide added space and assistance for area hospitals that may become overwhelmed by the sick and worried-well following a disaster. It can also serve as a command center or a point of dispensing site, where residents would go to receive vaccines or other medications.

Who can volunteer?

Volunteers are needed with backgrounds ranging from physicians, nurses and veterinarians to chaplains, truck drivers and interpreters. Everyone, no matter what their background, has a contribution they can make during an emergency. Residents age 18 and older from the following counties in southwest Ohio, Northern Kentucky and southeast Indiana can join the TMRC: Adams, Brown, Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Hamilton, Highland and Warren counties in Ohio; Dearborn, Franklin, Ohio, Ripley and Switzerland counties in Indiana; and Boone, Campbell, Carroll, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton, Owen and Pendleton counties in Kentucky. A background check may be performed on all applicants as a condition of service.

Where can I get more information?

For more information about the Tristate Medical Reserve Corps and the May introductory meeting, call (513) 531-0267 or e-mail mrc@gchc.org. Directions and a map to the Cintas Center are available at www.cintascenter.com.

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The Tristate Medical Reserve Corps is a division of the U.S. Surgeon General's Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) program. The MRC program's mission is to serve citizens and communities throughout the United States by establishing local teams of volunteers to strengthen the public health infrastructure and improve emergency preparedness. The MRC was founded after President Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address, in which he asked all Americans to volunteer in support of their country. It is a specialized component of Citizen Corps, a national network of volunteers dedicated to ensuring hometown security. Citizen Corps, along with AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Peace Corps, are part of the President's USA Freedom Corps, which promotes volunteerism and service nationwide. More information is available at www.medicalreservecorps.gov.